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To free this belief from all metaphysical and practical objections, to develop its full implications in a manner convincing to the men of to-day, would be no light task. Greater clearness regarding the soul and its relation to the universe is certainly desirable, say the metaphysicians, rightly rejecting the assumption of the common man that we already know all that is necessary about the self. But neither Kant nor commonsense seem capable of preventing a war like the present one, and perhaps so simple a restatement of the commonsense and Kantian view as Dr. Ladd has given will not quite content the people of the post-war period.

Nevertheless, Dr. Ladd has written one of the most hopeful and helpful of books—a book that is, if one may steal Paul Elmer More's application of a saying of Disraeli's, notably "on the side of the angels." In no small degree the author, in defining the beliefs he has held to against discouraging opposition for a lifetime, has formulated the probable faith of the future.

THE NEMESIS OF MEDIOCRITY. By Ralph Adams Cram, Litt.D., LL.D. Boston: Marshall Jones Company, 1917.

Can the aims of Democracy be achieved by the methods of Democracy? It is this question—and none can be more important or more urgent—which Ralph Adams Cram discusses with great force and directness in his *Nemesis of Mediocrity*.

The semi-religious halo which oratory has placed upon the brow of Democracy has had the unwholesome effect of exempting our political institutions from that constant pressure of criticism and adjustment which in every other department of our national life has been the soul of progress. In challenging the fundamental principle which underlies Democratic methods, namely that quantity and not quality is the true measure of right governance, Mr. Cram has performed a task to which he has brought an unusual combination of clear thought and moral courage.

Mankind has paid an incalculable price in blood and agony for its refusal to believe that for the accomplishment of noble purposes something more is needed than a generous idealism and a warm faith in the goodness of all men. What the world's Democracy is paying today is neither more nor less than part of this price.

The ultimate reason why we are now at war, the final cause of the world's failure thus far to crush one autocracy, after nearly four years of heroic effort, is that the autocrat, whether engaged in good works or in evil, has always realized the vital need of that strong leadership which Democracy has rejected as undemocratic.

Mr. Cram has an abiding faith in true Democracy, but he is convinced that without the wise and firm direction of the few, the power of the many can but make Democracy a menace instead of a blessing.

Every writer and orator, from Plato to the Hon. James Hamilton Lewis, who has delivered himself upon the subject of politics, has given us a definition of democracy. Mr. Cram follows this ancient custom when he says: "True Democracy means three things; Abolition of Privilege, Equal Opportunity for All, and Utilization of Ability.

Unless democracy achieves these things it is not democracy, and no matter how 'progressive' its methods, how apparently democratic its machinery, it may perfectly well be an oligarchy, a kakistocracy or a tyranny."

It was James Russell Lowell who asked forty years ago: "Is ours a government of the people, by the people, for the people or a kakistocracy rather, for the benefit of knaves at the cost of fools?" It is Ralph Adams Cram who answers that, so far as the three main elements of true Democracy are concerned "the peoples are worse off than they were fifty years ago, while during the same period government and society have become progressively more venal, less competent and further separated from the ideals of honour, duty and righteousness."

These are hard words, but they cannot be dismissed with a gesture of dissent. Anyone who reads Mr. Cram's *Nemesis of Mediocrity* and M. Faguet's *Culte d'Incompétence* is confronted with facts of which the significance cannot be mistaken. For the United States they mean either that after striving for more than a century to establish a Democratic government we have failed to do so, or that having established a Democratic government in 1787, it has failed to give us anything approaching real Democracy.

It is a matter worthy of serious consideration that in 1912, both the Democratic and the Progressive platforms made these very charges against American Democracy. The Democrats demanded "a return to the rule of the people," and offered themselves as "an agency through which the complete overthrow and extirpation of corruption, fraud, and machine rule in American politics can be effected." The Progressive platform stated that "Behind the ostensible government sits enthroned an invisible government, owing no allegiance and acknowledging no responsibility to the people." These are far from being encouraging descriptions of American Democracy one hundred and thirty-four years after the adoption of the Constitution.

Mr. Cram attributes the present plight of the world's Democracy to a prevailing mediocrity of character, talent, and culture. He places the blame for this condition upon that false doctrine of environmental determinism which has flattered the ignorant into the belief that it is in society's laboratory, the school, and not in nature's laboratory, the blood, that fools can be made wise, and the vicious virtuous.

In a world which is almost convinced that one man is just as good as another, and which is quite convinced that, whether he is or not, he is entitled to just the same weight in the political system, there is little room for great leaders of men, and less for the biological truth that leadership is a native quality inherited from the ancestry, and not a label which can be pinned upon a man by the vote of a party caucus.

Mr. Cram is less at home when he deals with the biological aspects of human progress than he is when his subject is the fallen state of culture and politics. The readiness with which he accepts a great part of the teachings of twentieth century science upon heredity—even though he places the word science between inverted commas—is mis-mated to the scorn he heaps upon the pioneers in the modern study of evolution; nor is it clear why he should deny to the spiritual qualities in man that capacity of transmittance by descent which he accords to genius, character, and intelligence.

What politics has done to leadership, as Mr. Cram points out, is to drive most of it into other fields—into commerce, banking, engineering—and to impose upon those who would still be political leaders the condition that they should lead as a man strapped on a horse and driven before a cavalry regiment would lead a charge.

That the Democratic world has been crying in vain since 1914 for a leader great enough to restore leadership to the position from which Democratic methods have degraded it is a grim fact which, of all the grim facts of the war, is the most difficult to face with equanimity.

AN OUTLINE SKETCH OF ENGLISH CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY. By George Burton Adams, Litt. D. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918.

Just at present, while history is being made and while civilization is at stake, one may see more clearly than it has been usual for men to see in the past that the true interest of history is the progress of civilization.

But with just what aspect of civilization should history chiefly concern itself? The question requires a definite answer, for civilization is a result to which many factors contribute, and the effort to study all of them at once usually results in confusion.

Unquestionably those who insist upon the primary importance of *constitutional* history are essentially right. Those developments in the life of peoples that have to do with the continuing effort to adjust the more or less conflicting claims of liberty and government do, it is plain, mark out in the clearest and broadest outline the advance of civilization and define its meaning. Freedom and discipline—these ideas are fundamental. It is on a moral difference in the conception of these that the vital distinction between *Kultur* and civilization hinges.

The constitutional view is, on the whole, the prevailing view in most books of history. Yet these very books are often found dull by the inexpert reader. The historic narrative seems so slow in reaching the point—the idea that interests and enlightens; and at the same time there is so much that seems like digression! Emphatically the average intelligent reader needs to have some means of relating historic facts and ideas before he begins to read history at all. Possessing this, he can hardly miss an understanding of the story and a true sense of its grandeur, even though his memory retain few details.

An admirable key to English history is supplied by Dr. George Burton Adams in his new book sketching the growth of the English constitution. This treatise is a model of judicious condensation. In its larger point of view, moreover, as well as in its discussions of particular questions, it is, without being too theoretic, notably clear and philosophical.

This larger point of view is important; for the leading ideas about English history and about history and life in general which one obtains from a not too studious reading of Dr. Adams's book are of wide application. In particular, one is made to understand the process of English constitutional growth through unforeseen extensions of principle and through unnoticed changes—as in the unintended develop-